Annual Report

1998 - 1999

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Information, Science and Technology Agency

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The Honourable Garde Gardom, QC
Lieutenant Governor
Province of British Columbia

May it please your Honour:

I respectfully submit the annual report of the Information, Science and Technology Agency for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1999.

Graeme Bowbrick

Honourable Graeme Bowbrick
Minister responsible for the
Information, Science and Technology Agency

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For more information on the Information, Science and Technology Agency, visit ISTA's Web site: www.ista.gov.bc.ca

ISTA's Vision

Enabling B.C. and its citizens to prosper in a transformed, knowledge-based economy.

Mission

ISTA leads government efforts to:

- strengthen the economy through the development and application of technology;
- connect British Columbians through universal, affordable access to networks and the services delivered over those networks, and;
- transform government programs and service delivery through better management and use of information and technology.

BY

- facilitating, in collaboration, the development of the high-tech sector through strategies, policies and support;
- enabling electronic delivery of government business;
- establishing strategies, policies and standards for government Information Management/ Information Technology and managing the delivery of corporate IM/IT services.

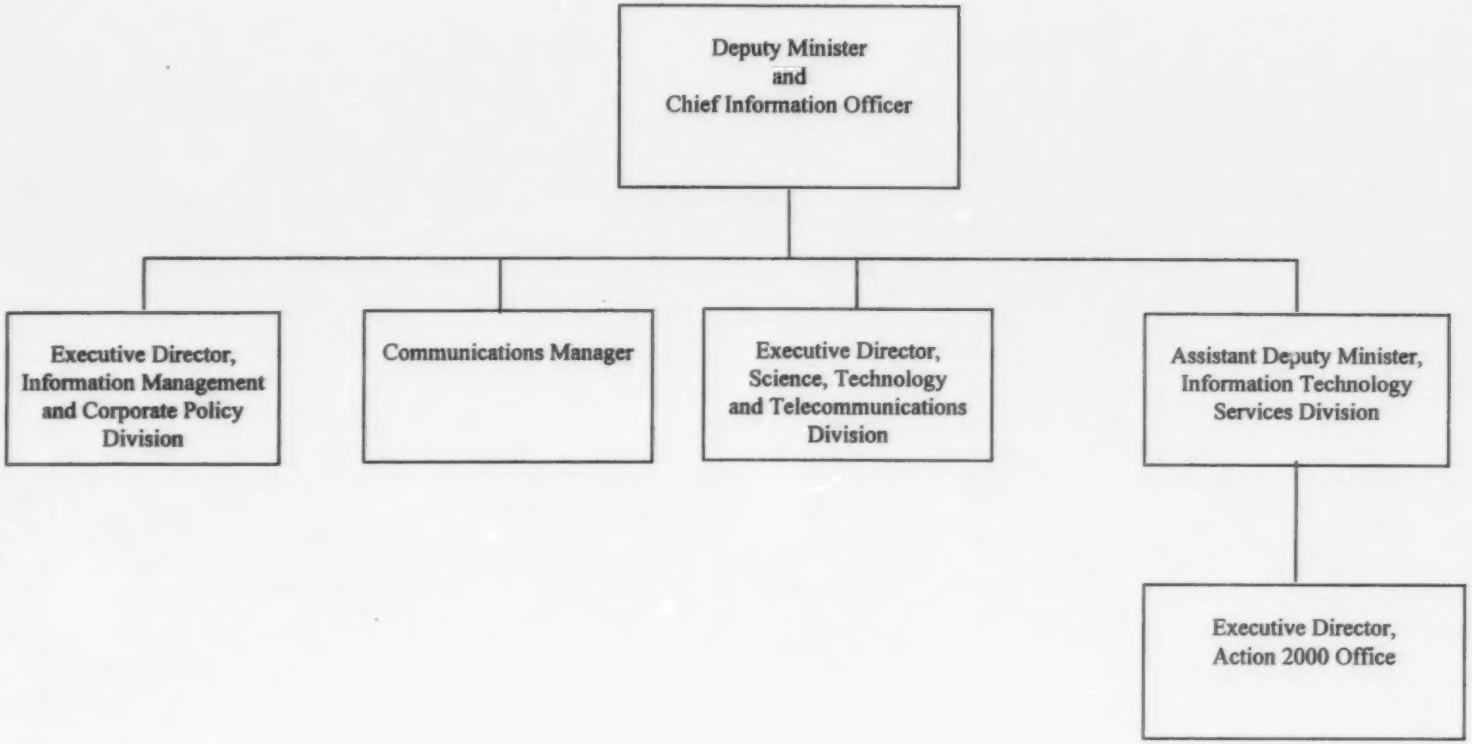
Values

The following values represent corporate and individual behaviours and define the Agency employees' interactions with clients, suppliers and each other:

- treating all individuals with fairness, dignity and respect;
- recognizing creativity, innovation and risk-taking;
- emphasizing excellence, initiative and leadership by example;
- believing in teamwork and good working relationships – promoting strong partnerships and open communication;
- respecting the need for a balance between work and personal life; and
- striving for continuous improvement in quality and service.

INFORMATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY

1998 – 1999


Deputy Minister
and
Chief Information Officer
Executive Director, Information Management and Corporate Policy Division
Communications Manager
Executive Director, Science, Technology and Telecommunications Division
Assistant Deputy Minister, Information Technology Services Division
Executive Director, Action 2000 Office

ISTA HISTORY and ORGANIZATION

Legislative responsibility for the Information, Science and Technology Agency resided with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology following a transfer from the Ministry of Employment and Investment in March 1998.

In fiscal 1998-99, ISTA's primary focus was in three broad areas: management of government's information technology services, creation of a new high-technology strategy and improving the public's electronic access to government services. As well, ISTA was mandated to manage the Y2K transition across government.

Specifically, ISTA exercised its role as a central agency within government and worked to improve the efficiency of the delivery of government services through information management and information technology policies, standards and strategies.

Another priority of ISTA was contributing to the development of B.C.'s knowledge-based economy through promoting and advancing the high-technology sector. This also involved enhancing British Columbians' ability to fully utilize and access telecommunications and information networks throughout the Province.

Information Management and Corporate Policy Division
(formerly the Information Management and Corporate Services Branch and the Information and Technology Branch)

Responsibilities
Cross-government information management and technology policy and standards
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BC Archives and information access
Information analysis and scheduling (*Document Disposal Act*)
Data management

Priority Projects
Protection of privacy in the private sector
Improving and enabling electronic government services
Electronic commerce

Information Technology Services Division

Responsibilities
Information technology services
Cross government information technology initiatives

Priority Projects
Year 2000 implementation task force and project management office
IT recruitment initiative

Science Technology and Telecommunications Division
(formerly the Science and Technology Branch and the Access and Telecommunications Branch)

Responsibilities
Science and technology programs
High-technology sector liaison and development
Telecommunications and access initiatives and policy
Science Council of BC

Priority Projects
Development of a new provincial high-technology strategy

Information Management and Corporate Policy Division

The division is responsible for developing/implementing a cross-government strategy and policy framework for the management of information and technology (IM/IT), for corporate information management, for the Archives, and for transformational activities related to electronic commerce.

Provincial Archives

Purpose of Branch Central archives service for the BC government. It provides access to records of enduring provincial value for both the provincial government and public.

Major Highlights

- John A. Bovey retired after 19 years as Provincial Archivist.
- Gary A. Mitchell was appointed as B.C.'s ninth Provincial Archivist in October 1998.
- New security measures were implemented due to the tragic theft of archival maps in the previous year. Structural changes to the reference room and the security desk were made as well as the introduction of surveillance cameras.
- On October 9, 1998, the Amazing BC Archives Time Machine was made available to the public. The web-site features 11 educational galleries covering B.C. history topics drawn from the province's K-12 social studies curriculum. The galleries have been designed for use by school children and their teachers and parents; however the content appeals to anyone interested in British Columbia's history.
- Eighteen of the 20 stolen archival maps were recovered and returned when the thief was caught in the United States.

Objectives	Achievements
Provide Universal Affordable Access	• The Amazing BC Archives Time Machine was made available to the public.
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• The Amazing BC Archives Time Machine provides a common curriculum base for the Ministry of Education and schools throughout the province.

Corporate Policy Branch

Purpose of Branch Develops strategies, policies and standards for information and technology management within government enabling more cost effective, secure and convenient services for the public. It is also responsible for Chapter 8 of the Government Management Operating Policy – Information and Technology Management.

Major Highlights

- Develop the Internet usage policy for government employees.
- Updated and advanced IM/IT standards.
- Created the Information Technology Security Policy (ITSP).
- Implemented, with ITSD, Treasury Board decisions regarding BC OnLine and shared processing services.

Objectives	**Achievements**
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Developed the Internet usage policy. • Produced the IT Security Policy. • Advanced IM/IT standards for government procurement.

Information and Data Management Branch

Purpose of Branch Provides leadership and support as the central agency in government for the administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Document Disposal Act*. It leads the information and privacy and records management programs within the B.C. government.

Major Highlights

- Developed a comprehensive Corporate Information Management Strategy to enable more efficient management of information and better long-term investments in information technologies.
- Completed the corporate submission to the legislative review of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*
- Provided the focal point for government in realizing efficiencies in information and privacy costs.
- Began discussions and consultation with stakeholders regarding the extension of privacy regulations into the private sector.

Objectives	**Achievements**
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Corporate Information Management Strategy.

Information Technology Services Division (ITSD)

The mandate of ITSD is to be a supplier of cost effective IT infrastructure services to B.C. government ministries and closely held agencies.

Demand Management Branch

Purpose of Branch Responsible for ITSD's finance and administration; government's business aggregation as it relates to the provision of common IT infrastructure; customer support; cross-government information systems; provision of electronic commerce through BC OnLine; and a customer service centre for all ITSD services.

Major Highlights

- Sale of the BC OnLine Service to the private sector initiated.
- Customer service centre optimization project was established to plan the strategic direction and evaluate the technology being used resulting in changes to operations.
- Developed corporate WEB services for all ministries to use primarily for publishing material on the WEB.

Objectives	Achievements
Provide Universal Affordable Access	• Support of a common Internet approach across government by providing the IT services for BC Internet Services Branch in the Ministry of Finance - Queen's Printer.
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Implemented production service for correspondence tracking for all ministries to use. • Retirement of an old reporting software package in government (MARK IV). • Provided easy-to-use, timely and effective problem reporting/problem management services through a single point of contact; and employed technology where possible to streamline the process flow and to make more efficient use of government resources.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Leadership/custodian role in moving government ministries to a common application for Corporate Records Management (CRMS). Four ministries using the application. • Nine ministries now using the Correspondence Tracking (CTS) application standard. • Introduced internal electronic service delivery to government with an Internet-based government travel voucher for ministries to use.

Network Services

Purpose of Branch Delivery of shared, secure and cost-effective province-wide telecommunications for ministries and other government agencies.

Major Highlights

- IT infrastructure services review and evaluation of voice services was concluded with a commitment to retain voice services within the public service.
- Several RFPs were issued in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government and foster development of B.C.'s information technology industry.
- Announced the investment of $123 million over six years for the Provincial Learning Network (PLNet).
- Implemented a secure remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN) service to allow access to government data from the Internet.
- Implemented a firewall to filter all government data traffic going to or from the Internet.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Formed a cross-government Information Technology (IT) security committee. • Implemented a secure remote access Virtual Private Network (VPN) service to allow access to government data from the Internet. • Implemented a firewall to filter all government data traffic going to or from the Internet. • Installed the first Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) test systems.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• In April 1998, the government of British Columbia announced an investment of $123 million over six years to bring the best educational programmes to students in B.C. via an information highway. The Provincial Learning Network (PLNet) is the electronic infrastructure that will link approximately 2,000 educational institutions by the year 2000. The PLNet will enable those institutions to communicate more effectively with each other and across the Internet. Network Services became responsible for province-wide network services; including planning for and implementing the network, as well as network management. The satellite portion of the PLNet project was commenced during this period. This helps to improve telecommunications services to 25 remote communities and schools. • Continued PROVnet optimization. PROVnet is the provincial government's voice network. • Concluded the IT infrastructure services review and evaluation of voice services with the release of a June 9 letter from Public Service Employee Relations Commission (PSERC) to the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) indicating the government's commitment to retaining voice services within the public service, thereby concluding the process which began in 1997.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for "Enterprise Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) Switches" to allow upgrade of the backbone network to provide better service and added capacity.
Foster Development of B.C.'s Information Technology Industry	• Issued an RFP for "Pre-Qualification for Local and Inter-City Digital Telecommunication Facilities" in April 1998. • Issued an RFP for "Local and Inter-City Analog Telecommunication Facilities" in April 1998. • Both these RFPs are expected to enhance the IT industry by providing business to additional small companies that have never provided service to the government before.

Office Information Systems and Workplace Support

Purpose of Branch

Office Information Systems and Workplace Support provides electronic mail and calendar systems, directories (electronic mail, telephone and e-commerce) central post office for all of government electronic mail and other related services. Additionally, responsible for ITSD's desktop support and technical advice to central agencies.

Major Highlights

- The B.C. government common exchange service continued to grow and provide messaging services for over 12,000 users.
- The B.C. government telephone directory service continued to grow and provide services to both the public and government. The web site serviced over an average of 360,000 queries a month.
- Participated in migrating the legislative precinct from Macintosh to government standard NT technology.
- Participated in negotiating the select purchasing plan agreement between the government and Microsoft.
- Redesigned the work place support business model. Reduced costs and re-focused new organization to support the internal agency requirements. Transitioned remaining ministry customers to other suppliers

Objectives	**Achievements**
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Met service levels and financial targets for the Office Information Systems and Workplace Support. • Completed seven major migration projects of government organizations moving from their legacy email systems to government's common messaging system. • Continued to maintain software currency with the exchange services. • Introduced a new FAX service. • Implemented an integrated calendar application for the legislative precinct.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Developed the System Management Server (SMS) service offering for ITSD and Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations. • Converted Ministry of Agriculture and Food to B.C. government authentication model.

Sourcing Services Management Branch (SSMB)

Purpose of Branch Responsible for large scale, cross-government service management and project office support for outsourced contracts for IM/IT services including the establishment of private sector partnerships, with shared risk and reward. In these relationships, the private sector's role is that of innovative supplier of information technology services, while SSMB's role is that of an expert consumer on behalf of government.

Major Highlights

- Negotiations completed in July 1998 for a project agreement under the CSA-BC for the provision of mainframe-based MVS/VM and print services.
- Processes developed for ongoing management of service delivery to established targets.
- Third party benchmarking model and baseline assessment developed and implemented.
- Data Centre technology refreshed through private sector expenditures.

Objectives	Achievements
Foster Development of BC's IT Industry	• IBM established Pacific Development Centre with staffing complement of 200. • IBM subcontracted work under the CSA to 34 B.C.-based companies. • To assist in the development of information technology skills in the province, IBM established a $500,000 scholarship fund through which 10 scholarships of $10,000 to B.C. post-secondary educational institutions will be provided annually. • ISM-BC hired over 100 new IT professionals. • ISM-BC established a world class-sized Data Centre in Victoria which they will market worldwide.

Technology Architecture and Information Services

Purpose of Branch Responsible for:

1. Strategic planning and architecture for information technology and information services including: the government IT library; and administrative support to the Advisory Council on Information Management.
2. Data processing; corporate web services; financial systems support; database applications support.

Major Highlights

- Conducted annual review and revision of government IT standards.
- Contributed significantly to the development of InfoSmart 2000 strategy.
- Provided support and liaison to the CIO and Treasury Board sponsored IT advisory committee reviewing the alternative ways for managing computer related services within government.
- Established on-going support role to Treasury Board staff to assist them in understanding the implications of government technology related issues.
- Expanded government IT library 'electronic services to the desktop' through introduction of a new restricted IT knowledge centre Web site containing licensed IT information, research and conference presentations from Gartner Group, META Group and Intelligence Data (computer and business journal articles).
- Extended IT industry research/analyst service licenses to include additional services and information access for no increase in cost to government.
- Introduced new teleconference presentation service across government which allows busy IT professionals to keep current through 1 ½ hour sessions addressing new and emerging IT issues and solutions.
- Implemented a shared cross-government Web service enabling ministries to focus on content presentation and eliminate duplicate infrastructure investments and effort.
- Established and successfully implemented the B.C. government Windows NT authentication service in the remote network centres across the province.
- Worked with the Purchasing Commission to evaluate request for proposal responses on potential outsourcing of the OpenVMS service.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Conducted annual review and revision of government IT standards. • Contributed significantly to the development of InfoSmart 2000 strategy. • Provided support and liaison to the CIO and Treasury Board sponsored IT advisory committee reviewing the alternative ways for managing computer related services within government. • Established on-going support role to Treasury Board staff to assist them in understanding the implications of government technology related issues. • Expanded government IT library 'electronic services to the desktop' through introduction of a new restricted IT knowledge centre Web site containing licensed IT information, research and conference presentations from Gartner Group, META Group and Intelligence Data (computer and business journal articles). • In 1998/99, the use of the IT library websites increased 79% from the previous year. Currently, 878 unique users access the site over 20 times/per user every month to acquire the important information they on a regular basis. Onsite training and demonstrations of the site have increased the awareness of systems employees across government to the value of these resources.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• The IT library negotiated a new Spectrum agreement with Gartner Group providing increased access to a wider array of online published information and analyst contact at no additional cost. • During the year, over 17,500 documents were accessed by government employees through the IT library's computer and business electronic service offerings and over 200 hours of professional IT analyst services were utilized across government. • A total of 228 library staff hours were spent training end users in 1998/99. Over the past couple of years this has dramatically increased the awareness and use of the IT information resources available to customers from their desktop. The results have been very positive and well received. • In the fall of 1998, over 300 people attended 44 teleconference presentations from these services. These are used as continuing education sessions for IT employees in government at no additional cost to government since they are part of the IT industry services licensed by the IT library.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Over 1100 hours of professional staff time was spent in providing professional research services to government clients. This service supported major government initiatives such as Common Server Infrastructure, PLNet, Electronic Forms, IT Recruitment and Year 2000, as well as research required for IT decision-making across government. • Over 7,000 books, videos, journals, etc. were circulated to employees across government. This represents a 15% increase from 1997/98. • Government customers of the IT Library rated the overall service they received at 4.65 on a 5 point scale (where 5 was 'excellent') in an anonymous survey that was answered by over 150 active users of the services. This was an increase from the 4.46 rating the Library received in the 1997/98 survey. • Met service level targets for all infrastructure services managed (Open VMS, UNIX, NT). • Provided centralized facility management services for government's new PHARMANET and Central Accounting Systems (CAS) applications. • Met increasing demand for database support services.

Objectives	Achievements
Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government	• Researched database management and technology trends to reduce impact of changing technology on database management practices and costs. • Installed new manufacturer releases of shared financial application software packages on government enterprise servers. • Implemented a shared cross-government Web service enabling ministries to focus on content presentation and eliminate duplicate infrastructure investments and effort.
Foster Development of BC's Information Technology Industry	• Established and successfully implemented the B.C. government Windows NT authentication service in the remote network centres across the province. • Met rapidly increasing cross–government demand for database support services. • Initiated a pilot project to evaluate providing access to non-licensed holdings of the government IT library to IT professionals in private sector and extended public sector organizations. • Established partnerships with private sector to expand REMEDY service offering. • Provided on-going technology consulting support to aid in the management of government's external service agreement with IBM/ISM for MVS/VM operations.

Objectives	Achievements
Foster Development of BC's Information Technology Industry	• Provided on-going technology consulting support to aid in the management of government's external service agreement with Access/BC for BC OnLine operations • Worked with the Purchasing Commission to evaluate request for proposal responses on potential outsourcing of the OpenVMS service.

Year 2000 Implementation Task Force and Action2000

Purpose of Branch To monitor and coordinate government efforts to eliminate threats to government systems posed by the year 2000 computer problem.

Major Highlights

- A project management office, *Action2000* was established to take leadership on cross-government Y2K activities. The role of Action2000 included aggressively expanding communications on Y2K across the province.
- The end of 1998/1999 saw government mission critical systems 49 per cent Y2K ready.

Objectives

- Protect the Interests of British Columbians

Goals

1. Minimize any impact to citizens due to Y2K failures of government mission-critical programs.
2. Fiscally responsible action through co-ordinated effort across government organizations and other stakeholders.
3. An informed public.

Achievements

- The analysis to determine the effect of Y2K on government computer applications was completed and attention focused on remediation activities.
- Growing understanding that Y2K readiness depends on people at all levels of government devoting adequate resources to modify their business systems for Year 2000 readiness.
- Categories were developed for categorization of Y2K projects: Mission Critical, Business Priority and Other.
- First priority for government was readying mission-critical projects. Mission Critical is a project involving a system(s) whose failure could lead to: loss of life; personal hardship to citizens; major damage to the environment; or significant loss in revenue.
- The British Columbia Buildings Corporation (BCBC) completed its inventory of 3300 buildings. The result of their efforts was an inventory of all embedded systems within these buildings and their readiness status.
- Monitoring and reporting organizations in the broader public sector, including schools, universities and colleges, crown corporations and health authorities, was made a leading priority of Action2000.
- A comprehensive Year 2000 communications plan was developed which included visits to communities across the province, publications for individuals and businesses, a media relations team, a 1-800 line, and communications to provincial civil servants and ministries.
- The need for all hazard business continuation plans was acknowledged and scheduled.

Science, Technology and Telecommunications Division

On June 23, fiscal year 1998/99, the Science and Technology Branch and the Access to Telecommunications Branch were amalgamated to create the Science, Technology and Telecommunications Division. The Division focuses on improving access for British Columbians to telecommunications services as well as fostering the development of B.C.'s information technology sector.

Major Highlights

- Orchestrated the High-Tech Forum comprising representatives of industry, academia and government to create a High-Tech Strategy for British Columbia. The High-Tech Forum brought together executive members from about 30 companies in the high-technology sector, representatives from B.C.'s post-secondary institutions and government to discuss high-tech industry needs and to collectively determine a course of action for taking advantage of B.C's high-tech opportunities.
- Meanwhile, the division continued to support growth of the high-technology sector through on-going programs.

Objectives	Achievements
Create a new High-Technology Strategy to Increase Jobs and Investment	• Identified key industry and academic stakeholders to participate in the provincial High-Tech Forum. • Hosted six meetings of key stakeholders to identify the key goals of the strategy. • Worked with the Ministry of Labour to implement changes to the *Employment Standards Act* to provide more flexibility for the high technology industry (February 1999). • Supported the development of a joint task force to promote, develop and market Greater Victoria's emerging high-technology industry.

Objectives	Achievements
Ensure British Columbians Have Equitable, Affordable Access to Information	• Worked to provide lower cost telephone services and new services to remote communities through the federal/provincial Infrastructure Works program. Supplied first-time phone service to five remote B.C. communities: Longworth, West Branch, Nazko, Oona River, and Pink Mountain. Nearing completion on service to Keithly Creek.
Continued Growth of the High-Tech Sector	• Supported organizations and programs that expand the growth of B.C.'s high-technology sector, including: the BC Science Council; the Advanced Systems Institute; the BC Biotechnology Alliance; the Vancouver Island Advanced Technology Centre; four university-industry liaison offices, seven regional councils; four technology centres; Networks of Centres of Excellence; the First Job in Science and Technology program; the Technology Assistance Program; the Market Assessment of Research and Technology program; and the Graduate Research Engineering and Technology scholarship program.
	• Produced a report on status and directions for wireless communications to assess implications and policy directions for the province.
	• Supported six conferences in B.C. that helped to foster national and international relationships in the scientific community and the high-technology sector.

Objectives	Achievements
Continued Growth of the High-Tech Sector	• Assisted three of the seven regional councils to begin making funding decisions at the community level. The three new independent councils are in Prince George, Nanaimo and the West Kootenays. • Embarked on new initiatives resulting from the Ministers' Summit on Software Industry Skills Shortages, to maintain the growth and momentum of the high-technology industries in B.C. Initiatives included: supporting hands-on training for recent graduates; developing on-line career information; funding a study of information technology people leaving B.C.; and refocusing the Partners in Science Awareness specifically on careers in science and technology where skills shortages were occurring. • Delivered the First Job in Science and Technology Program, provided over two hundred new job opportunities for recent science, technology and engineering graduates in the province.

Communications Branch

Purpose of Branch: Supports Agency programs and initiatives by providing communications planning, media relations, issues management, event management, and advertising and creative services to the Minister and Executive. Develops and distributes communications material on behalf of the Minister to stakeholders and the general public.

Major Highlights

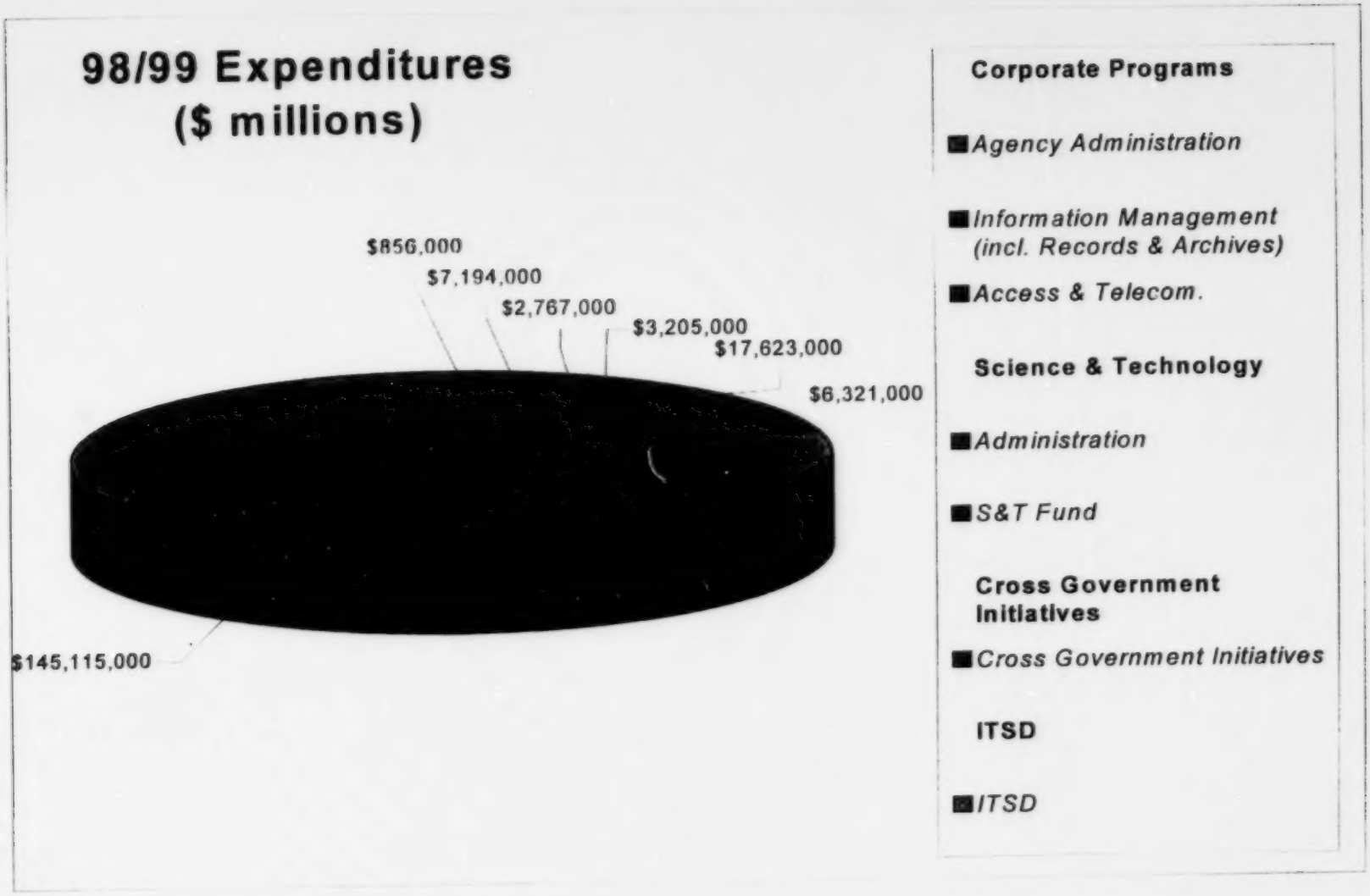
- Assisted Action 2000 Office in creating communications material on Y2K issue to be used in province-wide community outreach programs; created and staffed Y2K readiness display at UBCM.

- Worked with high-tech companies, post-secondary educational institutes, stakeholders and partners to increase awareness of science, technology and high-technology opportunities in British Columbia.

- Organized events related to the creation of a high-tech strategy for B.C.

- Promoted the Market Assessment of Research and Technology program and the Technology Assistance Program province-wide to foster development of B.C.'s high-tech industry.

- Created public awareness of the government's achievements and milestones in promoting electronic service delivery and ensuring citizen access to telecommunications and the Internet.


98/99 Expenditures
($ millions)
$856,000
$7,194,000
$2,767,000
$3,205,000
$17,623,000
$6,321,000
$145,115,000
Corporate Programs
Agency Administration
Information Management (incl. Records & Archives)
Access & Telecom.
Science & Technology
Administration
S&T Fund
Cross Government Initiatives
Cross Government Initiatives
ITSD
ITSD